Elizabeth Allen

THE Nature *and* Design OF CHRISTIANITY.

Extracted from a late AUTHOR.

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THE NATURE *and* DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. THE Wisdom of Mankind has for several Ages been enquiring into the Nature of Man, and the Nature of the World in which he is placed.

The Wants and Miseries of human Nature, and the Vanity of Worldly Enjoyments, have made it difficult for the wisest Men to tell, what human Happiness was, or wherein it consisted

It has pleased the infinite Goodness of GOD to satisfy our Enquiries, by a Revelation made to the World by his Son JESUS CHRIST.

This Revelation has laid open the great Secrets of Providence from the Creation of the World. It has explain'd the present State of Things, and given Man all the Information that is necessary, both to give him Rest here, and to lead him safely to everlasting Happiness.

It is now only necessary that the poor Wisdom of Man do not exalt itself against GOD, that we suffer our Eyes to be open'd by him that made them, and our Lives to be conducted by him, in whom *we live, move, and have our Being.*

II. As Happiness is the sole End of all our Labours, so this Revelation aims at nothing else.

It gives us right Notions of ourselves, of our true Good and real Evil; it shews us our true Condition, both our Greatness and Meanness, our Happiness and Misery.

Before this, Man was a meer Riddle to himself, and his Condition full of Darkness and Perplexity; a restless Inhabitant of a miserable disorder'd World, *walking in a vain Shadow, and disquieting himself in vain.*

But this Light has dispersed the Anxiety of his vain Conjectures. It has brought us acquainted with GOD; and, by adding Heaven to Earth, and Eternity to Time, has

has open'd such a glorious View of Things, as leads Men, even in this World, to a *Peace of* God *which passeth all Understanding*.

III. This Revelation acquaints us, that we have a Spirit within us, which was created after the Divine Image; that this Spirit is now in a fallen Condition; that the Body in which it is placed is its Sepulchre, where it is enslaved to fleshly Thoughrs, blinded with false Notions of Good and Evil, and dead to all Taste of its true Happiness.

It teaches us, that the World in which we live, is also in a disorder'd, irregular State, and cursed for the Sake of Man; that it is no longer the Paradise that God made it, but the Remains of a drowned World, full of Matks of God's Displeasure, and the Sin of its Inhabitants.

That it is a meer Wilderness, a State of Darkness, a Vale of Misery; where Vice and Madness, Dreams and Shadows, variously please and torment the short, miserable Lives of Men.

Devils also, and evil Spirits have here their Residence, promoting the Works of Darkness, and wandering up and down seeking whom they may devour.

So that Man, in his natural State, is like a Person sick of Variety of Diseases, knowing neither his Distempers nor his Cure, and inclosed in a Place where he can hear or see, or feel, or taste of nothing but what tends to enflame his Disorders.

IV. But Christianity puts an End to this State of Things, blots out all the Ideas of worldly Wisdom, brings the World itself to Ashes, and creates all anew. It calls Man from an animal Life, and earthly Societies, to be born again of the Holy Ghost, and be made a Member of the Kingdom of God.

It Crushes into Nothing the Concerns of this Life, condemns it as a State of Vanity and Darkness, and leads Man to Happiness with God in the Realms of Light.

It proposes the purifying of our Souls, enliven'd with the Divine Spirit: It sets before us new Goods and Evils, and forms us to a glorious Participation of the Divine Nature.

This is the one End of Christianity. It does not leave us to grovel on in the Desires of the Flesh, to cast about

for

for worldly Happineſs, and wander in Darkneſs an
Exile from God: But the ſole Deſign of it is, to lea
us from all Thoughts of Reſt here, to ſeparate us fro
worldly Tempers, to deliver us from the Folly of ou
Paſſions, the Slavery of our own Natures, the Power
evil Spirits, and unite us to God, the true Fountain
real Good. This is the mighty Change which Chriſt
anity aims at; to reform our whole Natures, renew ou
Souls in the Image of God, and make them the Inha
bitants of heavenly and immortal Bodies.

V, The Manner of which it changes our whole Sta
is equally great and wonderful.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, ſaith our ble
ſed Lord, *no Man cometh unto the Father but by me*.

As all Things were created by the Son of God, a
without him was not any thing made that was made, ſo a
all Things redeemed and reſtored by the ſame divi
Perſon.

As nothing could come into being without him,
nothing can enter into a State of Happineſs but by hi

The Dignity of this Redemption at once confoun
the Pride, and relieves the Miſery of Man. How fa
len muſt he be from God, that ſhould need ſo great
Mediator! And, on the other hand, how full of Com
fort is the Thought that ſo high a Method, ſo ſtupen
ous a Means, ſhould be taken to reſtore him to a Sta
of Peace and Favour with God.

VI. This is the true Point of View, in which eve
Chriſtian is to behold himſelf. He is to overlook t
poor Projects of this Life, and conſider himſelf as
Creature, thro' his natural Corruption, fallen into
State of endleſs Miſery; but by the Mercy of G o
redeem'd to a Condition of everlaſting Happineſs.

All the Precepts and Doctrines of the Goſpel a
founded on theſe two great Truths, the deplora
Corruption of human Nature, and its new Birth
Christ Jesus.

The one includes all the Miſery, the other all t
Happineſs of Man.

It is on theſe, that the whole Frame of Chriſtianity
built; forbidding only ſuch Things as faſten us to t
Diſorders of Sin, and commanding only thoſe Dut
which lead us into the Liberty of the Sons of God.

So that if we think and act as Chriſtians, we act ſuitably to theſe Terms of our Condition, fearing and avoiding all the Motions of our corrupted Nature, cheriſhing the ſecret Inſpirations of the Holy Spirit, opening our Minds for the Reception of the Divine Light, and preſſing after all the Perfections of our New Birth.

All Chriſtians are continually to behave themſelves conformably to this double Capacity. We are to fear, and watch, and pray, like Men that are always on the Brink of eternal Death; and to believe, and hope, labour, and aſpire, like Chriſtians that are called to fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life.

VII. This Knowledge of ourſelves makes human Life a State of infinite Importance, placed upon ſo dreadful a Point betwixt two ſuch Eternities.

Well might our Saviour ſay to one that begg'd firſt to go and bury his Father, *Follow me, and let the Dead bury their Dead.*

For what is all the Buſtle and Hurry of the World but a dead Shew, and its greateſt Actors but dead Men, when compared with that real Life to which the Followers of CHRIST are redeem'd.

Had we been made only for this World, worldly Wiſdom had been our higheſt Wiſdom; but ſeeing we are redeem'd to an entirely contrary State, worldly Wiſdom is now our greateſt Fooliſhneſs.

It is now our only Wiſdom, to underſtand our new State, and conduct ourſelves by the Principles of our Redemption.

VIII. The Nature of our Chriſtian Calling is of that Concern, as to deſerve all our Thoughts; and is indeed only to be perceived by great Serioufneſs and Attention of Mind.

The Chriſtian State is an inviſible Life in the Spirit of GOD, ſupported not by ſenſible Goods, but the ſpiritual Graces of Faith and Hope: So that Man, buſied in earthly Cares and Enjoyments, perceives nothing of this great and heavenly Calling.

The Changes which Chriſtianity maketh in the preſent State of Things, are all inviſible: Its Goods and Evils, which are the only true Standards of our Actions, are not ſubject to the Knowledge of our Senſes.

In GOD *we live, and move, and have our Being*; b
how unſeen, how unfelt is all this!

CHRIST *is the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of t*
World, the true Light that lighteth every Man that com
into the World. He is the Alpha and Omega, the B
ginning and the End of all Things. The whole Creati
ſubſiſts in him and by him. No Perſon is in any Favo
with GOD, but by this great Mediator. But how in
ſible, how unknown to all our Senſes is this State
Things!

Chriſtians are Temples of the HOLY GHOST, con
created to GOD, Members of CHRIST's Myſtical Bod
of his Fleſh and his Bones, receiving Life, Spirit, a
Motion from him their Head

But our Senſes ſee no farther than our Parents a
Kindred according to the Fleſh, and fix our Hearts
earthly Friendſhips and Relations. Well then may t
Life be deem'd a State of Darkneſs, ſince it thus clou
and covers all the true Appearances of Things, a
keeps our Minds inſenſible and unaffected with Matt
of ſuch infinite Moment.

IX. Wou'd we therefore know our true Conditi
we muſt ſearch after *a Life that is hid with* CHRIST
GOD. We muſt conſider ourſelves as Parts of CHRIS
Myſtical Body, and as Members of the Kingdom
Heaven. In vain do we conſider the Beauty and Streng
of our Bodies, our Alliances with Men, and the D
ſtinctions of this World; for theſe Things no more co
ſtitute the State of human Life, than rich *Coffins*
beautiful *Monuments* conſtitute the State of the Dead.

We juſtly pity the laſt poor Efforts of human Gre
neſs, when we ſee a breathleſs Carcaſe lying in *Sta*
It appears ſo far from any real Honour, that it rath
looks like ridiculing the Miſery of our Nature, b
where Religion to form our Judgments, the Life of
proud, voluptuous, ſenſual Man, tho' ſhining in all t
Splendor of the World, would give us no higher an Id
of human Dignity, than a poor Corpſe laid in State.

For a Sinner, when glorying in the Luſt of the Fle
the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, is a m
ſhocking Sight of Miſery ridicul'd, than any Pagean
that can expoſe the Dead.

X.

X. We have an Apoſtle's Authority to ſay, tnat *he who liveth in Pleaſure is dead whilſt he liveth.*

This ſhews us that when we enquire what our Life is, we muſt think of ſomething higher than the Vigour of our Blood, the Gaiety of our Spirits or the Enjoyment of ſenſual Pleaſures: Since theſe, tho' the allow'd Signs of living Men are often undeniable Proofs of dead Cnriſtians.

When therefore we wonld truly know what our Life or Happineſs is, we muſt look at nothing that is ſenſible or temporal. We may as well dig in the Earth for Wiſdom, as look at Fleſh and Blood to ſee what we are, or at worldly Enjoyments to find what we want, or at temporal Evils, to ſee what we have to fear.

Our bleſſed Saviour put an abſolute End to all Enquiries of this kind when he ſaid, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do.*

Here our Bodies, and all bodily Enjoyments, are at one Daſh ſtruck out of the Account of Happineſs, and the preſent State of Things made ſo very low and inſignificant, that he who can only deprive us of them, has not Power enough to deſerve our Fear.

We muſt therefore, if we would conceive our true State, our real Good and Evil, look farther than theſe dim Eyes of Fleſh can carry our Views. We muſt, with the Eyes of Faith, penetrate into the inviſible World, the World of Spirits, and conſider our Order and Condition among them; a World which, as St. *John* ſpeaks, *hath no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon, to ſhine in it; for the Glory of* GOD *doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* For it is there, among eternal Beings, that we muſt take eternal Fellowſhip, or fall into a Kingdom of Darkneſs and everlaſting Miſery.

XI. Chriſtianity is ſo noble in its Ends, ſo extenſive in its Views, that it has no leſs Subjects than theſe to entertain our Thoughts.

It buries our Bodies, burns the preſent World, triumphs over Death by a general Reſurrection, and opens all into an eternal State.

It never conſiders us in any other reſpect than as fallen Spirits; it diſregards worldly Diſtinctions, and propoſes nothing to our Fears but eternal Miſery, nothing to our Hopes but endleſs Enjoyment with GOD.

This

This is the great, the important Condition, in which Chriſtianity has placed us, above our Bodies, above the World, above Death, to be preſent at the Diſſolution of all Things, to ſee the Earth in Flames, and the Heavens wrapt up like a Scroll, to ſtand at the general Reſurrection, to appear at the univerſal Judgment, and to live for ever, when all that our Eyes have ſeen is paſſed away and gone.

XII. Take therefore upon thee a Temper ſuitable to this Greatneſs of thy Condition. Remember that thou art an eternal Spirit, that thou art but for a few Months or Years in a State of Fleſh and Blood, only to try, whether thou ſhalt be for ever happy with God, or for ever Miſerable with the Devil.

Thou wilt hear of other Concerns and other Greatneſs in this World. Thou wilt ſee every Order of Men, every Family, every Perſon purſuing ſome fancied Happineſs, as if the World had not only Happineſs, but a particular Kind of Happineſs for all its Inhabitants.

But when thou ſeeſt this, fancy thou ſaweſt all the World aſleep; the Prince no longer a Prince; the Beggar no longer begging, but every Man ſleeping out of his proper State; ſome happy, others tormented, and all changing their Condition, as faſt as one fooliſh Dream could ſucceed another.

When thou haſt ſeen this, if thou wilt, thou mayſt go to ſleep too, thon mayſt lye down and dream. And this is all; for be as happy as the World can make thee, all is but ſleeping and dreaming: And what is ſtill worſe, it is like ſleeping in a Ship, when thou ſhouldſt be pumping for Life; or dreaming thou art a Prince, when thou ſhouldſt be redeeming thyſelf from Slavery.

XIII. This is no imaginary Flight of a melancholy Fancy, but the real Nature of Things.

For, if thou art that immortal Nature, that fallen Spirit, which Religion teaches us; if thou art to meet Death, Reſurrection, and Judgment, as the Forerunners of an eternal State; what are the little Flaſhes of Pleaſure, the changing Appearances of worldly Happineſs but ſo many Sorts of Dreams?

How canſt thou talk of the Advantages of Fortune, the Pleaſures of Food or Apparel, without being in a Dream?

Is the *Beggar* aſleep, when he fancies he is building himſelf fine Houſes? Is the *Priſoner* in a Dream, when he imagines himſelf in open Fields and fine Groves? And canſt thou think thy immortal Spirit is awake, while it is delighting itſelf in the Shadows and Bubbles of worldly Happineſs?

For, if it be true that Man is upon his Trial; if the Trial is for Eternity; if Life is but a Vapour; what is there that deſerves a ſerious Thought, but how to get well out of the World, and make it a right Paſſage to our eternal State?

XIV. It is the Manner of ſome Countries, in the Burial of their Dead, to put a Staff, and Shoes, and Money in the Sepulchre along with the Corps.

We ſee the Folly and Ignorance of ſuch a poor Contrivance to aſſiſt the Dead; but if we did but underſtand what is Life, we ſhould ſee as much Folly in the poor Contrivances to aſſiſt the Living.

For how many Things do People labour after, break their Reſt and Peace to get, which yet when gotten are of juſt as much real Uſe to them, as a Staff and Shoes to a Corpſe under Ground? They are always adding ſomething to their Life, which is only like adding another Pair of Shoes to a Body in the Grave.

Thou mayeſt hire more Servants, new paint thy Rooms, and put on richer Apparel; and theſe will help thee to be happy, as *golden* Staffs, or *painted* Shoes, will help a dead Man to walk.

XV. If thou remembreſt that the whole Race of Mankind are a Race of fallen Spirits, that paſs thro' this World as an Arrow paſſeth thro' the Air; thou wilt ſoon perceive, that there is no Wiſdom or Happineſs but in getting away to the beſt Advantage.

If thou remembreſt, that this Life is but a Vapour; that thou art in the Body, only to be holy, humble and heavenly minded; that thou ſtandeſt upon the Brink of Death, Reſurrection and Judgment; and that theſe great Things will ſuddenly come upon thee like a Thief in the Night, thou wilt ſee a Vanity in the Things of this World, greater than any Words can expreſs.

Do but therefore know thyſelf as Religion hath made thee known; do but ſee thyſelf in the Light which

CHRIST

CHRIST has brought into the World, and then thou wil
ſee that nothing concerns thee, but what concerns a
everlaſting Spirit that is going to GOD; and tnat there
are no Enjoyments here that are worth a Thought bu
ſuch as may adorn thee with that Holineſs withou
which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.

XVI. This is the End of Chriſtianity. It is not a
School for the teaching of moral Virtue. It is deepe
and more divine in its Deſigns: It implies an entire
Change of Heart, a full Dedication of ourſelves, our
Souls and Bodies unto GOD.

Our bleſſed Saviour came into the World, not to make
any Compoſition with it, but to put an End to the De-
ſigns of Fleſh and Blood; and to ſhew us, we muſt either
renounce this World to become Sons of GOD, or by en-
joying it, take our Portion among damned Spirits.

Chriſtianity is a State of Things that wholly regards
Eternity: It knows of no other Goods and Evils but
ſuch as relate to onother Life.

It is a Kingdom of Heaven that has no other Intereſts
in this World, than as it takes its Members out of it:
And when the Number of the Elect is compleat, this
World will be conſumed with Fire, as having no other
Reaſon for its Exiſtence, than the furniſhing Members
for that bleſſed Society, which is to laſt for ever.

I cannot here omit obſerving the Folly of human Wiſ-
dom, which, full of imaginary Projects, pleaſes itſelf
with its laſting Eſtabliſhments in a World doomed to De-
ſtruction, and which is to laſt no longer than till a ſuffi-
cient Number is redeemed out of it.

Did we ſee a Number of Animals haſtening to take
up their Apartments, and contending for the beſt Places
in a Building that was to be beat down as ſoon as its old
Inhabitants had got ſafe out, we ſhould ſee a Contention
full as wiſe as the Wiſdom of worldly Ambition.

XVII. That Chriſtianity requires a Change of Nature,
is plain from the whole Tenor of the Goſpel.

The Saviour of the World ſaith, *that except a Man be
born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into
the Kingdom of* GOD. We are told, that *to as many as
received him, to them he gave Power to become the Sons of*
GOD; *which were born not of Blood, nor of the Will of
the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of* GOD.

These Words plainly teach us, that Christianity implies an entire Change of Nature; that as our Birth was to us the Beginning of a new Life, and brought us into a Society of earthly Enjoyments, so Christianity is another Birth, that brings us into a Condition altogether as new as when we first saw the Light.

We begin again to be, we enter upon fresh Terms of Life, have new Tempers, new Hopes, and Fears, and an entire Change of every Thing that can be called Good or Evil.

This new Birth is the very Essence and Soul of Christianity; it is the Seal of the Promises, the Mark of our Sonship, the Earnest of our Inheritance, and the sure Proof of our Acceptance with God.

XVIII. If we would know, what a Change our New Life in CHRIST implies, let us consider what it is to be born of God.

Whosoever is born of GOD, saith the Apostle, *doth not commit Sin. For his Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot Sin, because he is born of* GOD. *In this the Children of* GOD *are manifest, and the Children of the Devil.* And again, *We know that whosoever is born of* GOD *sinneth not, but he that is begotten of* GOD *keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not,* 1 John iii. 10. v. 18.

The same Apostle tells us, *Whosoever is born of* GOD, *overcometh the World.* He overcometh all worldly Desires and worldly Fears. He is crucified unto the World, and the World crucified unto him. He is dead to the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. And he feareth not them that can kill the Body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.

We must therefore examine into the State of our Minds, and see whether we are thus changed in our Natures, thus born again: Whether we are so spiritual as to have overcome the World; so holy, as that we cannot commit Sin; since it is the undeniable Doctrine of Scripture, that the New Birth is as necessary to Salvation, as the believing in JESUS CHRIST.

XIX. We have seen two Marks of those that are born of GOD. A Third is given us by CHRIST himself. *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use*

you

you and perſecute you; that ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.

Well may a Chriſtian be ſaid to be *a new Creature*, ſince without ſuch a Diſpoſition as this, we cannot be Chriſtians, or Children of our Father, which is in Heaved. It is not enough therefore to love our Friends, Benefactors and Relations; but if we are born of GOD, we love like GOD: We have an univerſal Love, a Tenderneſs for all Mankind, imitating that Love which would that *all Men ſhould be ſaved.*

GOD is Love; and as he who dwelleth in Love dwelleth in GOD, ſo he that dwelleth not in Love dwelleth not in GOD.

It is impoſſible to be a true Chriſtian, and an Enemy at the ſame Time.

Mankind hath no Enemy but the Devil, and thoſe who are of the ſame Spirit.

XX. There is perhaps no Duty more contrary to Fleſh and Blood than this; but it is eaſy to thoſe that are born of GOD.

For, take but away earthly Goods and Evils, and you take away all Hatred and Malice; for they are the only Cauſes of thoſe baſe Tempers.

Let us here a while contemplate the Heighth and Depth of Chriſtian Holineſs, and that Godlike Spirit which it implies! And this alone might couvince us, that to be Chriſtians, we muſt be born again: We muſt to change our very Natures, as to have no Deſire in our Souls, bnt that of being like GOD.

And till we rejoice and delight only in GOD, we cannot have this Love to our Fellow-Creatures.

We may therefore learn from this, as well as from what was obſerv'd before, that Chriſtianity does not conſiſt in doing no Harm, nor in doing Good, (as it is called) nor yet in any particular moral Virtues, as ſome idly ſuppoſe; but in an intire Change of our Hearts, of all our natural Tempers, and a Life wholly devoted to GOD.

XXI. The ſame Doctrine is farther taught by our bleſſed Saviour, when ſpeaking of little Children, he ſaith, *Suffer them to come uuto me; for of ſuch is the Kingdom of GOD.* Luke xviii. 16.

If we are not reſolved to deceive ourſelves, if we have not

not Eyes that ſee not, and Ears that hear not, we muſt perceive that theſe Words imply ſome mighty Change in our Nature.

Now the peculiar Condition of Infants is ſuch, that they have every Thing to learn; they are to be taught by others, what they are to hope and fear, and wherein their proper Happineſs conſiſts.

And in this Senſe firſt are we to become as little Children, to be as tho' we had every thing to learn, and ſuffer ourſelves to be taught, what we are to chuſe, and what we are to avoid; to pretend to no Wiſdom of our own, but be ready to be taught of GOD, the only Way of purſuing that only Happineſs, which GOD in CHRIST propoſes to us; and to accept it with ſuch Simplicity of Mind as little Children who have nothing of their own to oppoſe to it.

XXII. But now, Is this infant Temper thus eſſential to Chriſtianity? Does the Kingdom of GOD conſiſt only of thoſe that have it? This then is another undeniable Proof that Chriſtianity implies a *new Creature*; ſuch as having renounced rhe Prejudices of Life, the Maxims of human Wiſdom, gives itſelf with a Child like Submiſſion and Simplicity, to be entirely govern'd by the Doctrines and Spirit of CHRIST. Craft and Policy, ſelfiſh Cunning, proud Abilities and vain Endowments, have no Admittance into this holy State of Society with CHRIST in GOD. The Wiſdom of this World, the Intrigues of Life, the Deſigns of Greatneſs and Ambition, lead to another Kingdom. He that follows CHRIST muſt be emptied of this vain Furniture, and put on the meek Ornament of infant and undeſigning Simplicity.

Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Diſputer of this World? Hath not GOD *made fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World?*

If we will partake of the Wiſdom of GOD, we muſt judge of this World, and its moſt boaſted Gifts, as the Wiſdom of GOD judgeth of them; we muſt deem them Fooliſhneſs, and with undivided Hearts labour after one Wiſdom, one Happineſs, in being entirely devoted to GOD.

XXIII. From all theſe Conſiderations it appears, that Chri-

Chriſtianity implies a *new Nature*, and a Life entirely devoted to God.

Now if this be Chriſtianity, it may ſerve to inſtruct two Sorts of People:

Firſt, Thoſe who are content with an Outward Religion; thoſe whoſe Chriſtianity lies only in an Outward Decency and Regularity of Life.

I don't mean, thoſe that are inſincere or hypocritical; but all thoſe who are content with Outward Religion; all who are content with any Thing ſhort of that Inward Holineſs, the Newneſs of Heart and Spirit which the Goſpel deſcribes.

They ſhould conſider, that Charity, Chaſtity, Sobriety and Juſtice, may be practiſed without Chriſtianity. A Jew, a Heathen, may be (what you call) charitable and temperate: But to make theſe Parts of Chriſtianity, they muſt proceed from a Heart truly turn'd to God, that is full of an infant Simplicity, that is crucified with Christ, that is born again of the Spirit, that is overcome the World. Temperance or Juſtice without this turn of Heart, may be the Temperance of a Jew or a Heathen: But it is not Chriſtian Temperance or Juſtice, till it proceeds from a Chriſtian Spirit. Could we do and ſuffer all that Christ himſelf did or ſuffered, yet if it was not all done in the ſame Temper, in the Spirit of Christ, it would profit us nothing.

XXIV. A Chriſtian is ſober, charitable and juſt, upon the ſame Principles and with the ſame Spirit that he receives the Holy Communion, as Acts of Obedience to God and as ſo many Inſtances of a Heart truly devoted to God.

A Chriſtian is ſober, not only ſo far as ſuits with a regular Life, but ſo as becomes one who is born of the Holy Spirit, that is one with Christ, who dwelleth in God and God in him.

He is charitable, not only ſo far as ſuits with his natural Temper, and with good Eſteem among Men; but in ſuch a Meaſure as is ſuitable to the Doctrines and Spirit of the Goſpel.

For indeed, neither Charity, nor Temperance, nor Juſtice, nor any other Virtues (as they are called) are Parts of Chriſtian Holineſs, till they ſpring from Holineſs of Heart, from the Mind that was in Christ.

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This is what cannot be too much conſidered by thoſe hoſe Religion has made no Change in their Hearts; ho fancy themſelves Chriſtians, only becauſe of the egularity of their Lives, altho' they have never expe- enced a Renewal in the Spirit of their Minds, after the nage of Him that created them; who pray without evotion, give Alms without Charity, and are Chriſti- s without the Spirit of Chriſtianity.

XXV. Secondly, This Doctrine may ſerve to inſtruct oſe who are convinced, they have been hitherto Stran- rs to Religion.

Some People, who are aſham'd of their paſt Lives, and gin to look toward Religion, think they have done ough, when they have reform'd the outward Courſe of eir Lives, when they have left off their groſs Vices d Follies, or are grown careful of ſome particular uties or Virtues.

Thus, a Man who has been a Drunkard many Years, inks he has made a ſufficient Change by becoming mperate: Another imagines he is in a very good and ſe State, becauſe he does not neglect the publick Wor- ip, as he uſed to do: A Lady fancies ſhe lives enough God, becauſe ſhe has left off Plays, and lives more home than formerly.

But ſuch People ſhould conſider, that Chriſtianity does t conſiſt in the fewneſs of our Vices; no, nor in any particular Virtue, nor yet in the Outward Amend- nt of our Lives: But in ſuch a thorough Change of art, as makes the Love of God the Spring, and Mea- e, and Rule of all our Tempers and Actions.

XXVI. It is a miſerable Error, to think we are riſtians, becauſe we are leſs vain or covetous, more er and decent in our Behaviour than we uſed to be. t this is the Caſe with many, who think they are well, cauſe they are not ſo bad as they were; becauſe they reformed from outward Wickedneſs; not conſidering w thorough a Change, how intire a Reformation of art as well as Life Chriſtianity implies.

But let ſuch People remember, that they who thus aſure *themſelves by themſelves are not wiſe*. Let them ember that they are not Diſciples of Christ, till y have, like him, *offered their whole Soul and Body as a*

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reaſonable; living Sacrifice to GOD; that they are n
Members of CHRIST's Myſtical Body, till they a
united unto him by a *new Spirit*; that they have not e
tered into the Kingdom of GOD, till they have enter
into an *infant Simplicity* of Heart, till they are ſo bo
of GOD as *not to commit Sin*, ſo full of an heavenly Spi
as to have overcome the World,

Let them remember, *He that is in* CHRIST *is a n*
Creature, and that nothing ſhort of this will avail befo
GOD; nothing leſs than the intire Renewal of the So
in Righteouſneſs and all true Holineſs. Let them
member, that there is no Religion that will ſtand us
any Stead, but that which is the Converſion of the He
to GOD; when all our Tempers are holy, heavenly
vine, ſpringing from a Soul that is *born again* of the S
rit, that is full of divine Love, and tends with one
Bent to a Perfection and Happineſs in the Enjoyment
GOD.

XXVII. Therefore let us look carefully to ourſelv
and conſider what Manner of Spirit we are of: Let
not think our Condition ſafe, becauſe we are of this
that Church or Perſuaſion, or becauſe we are ſtrict
ſervers of the outward Offices of Religion. For
cannot but ſee, theſe are Marks that belong to m
than belong to CHRIST. All are not his, that *prop*
or even *caſt out Devils, and work Miracles in his Na*
Much leſs thoſe who with corrupt Minds and wor
Hearts, are only *baptized in his Name*.

If Religion has raiſed us into a *new World*; if it
filled us with *new Ends* of Life; if it has taken Poſſe
of our Hearts, alter'd the whole Turn of our Minds,
changed the whole Stream of our Affections; if it
given us *new Joys and Griefs, new Hopes and Fears*; i
Things in us are become new; if *the Love of GO*
ſhed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt given unt
and this *Spirit beareth witneſs with our Spirits that w*
the Children of GOD: Then we are Chriſtians, no
his Name only, but in Truth; then we do believe in
HOLY JESUS, and we ſhall *rejoice in the Day of CHR*
that we have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

FINIS.